

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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847-691-6744 (cell) *Largest Iranian religious minority under assault by Islamic regime*
North American Assembly Headquartered in Wilmette, Ill.



Bahá'í Temple, Wilmette, Ill.

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan resolution authored by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) today condemning the persistent repression of the Bahá'í community in Iran, the nation's largest religious minority with more than 250,000 members. H.Res. 175 also demands the immediate release of more than a dozen Bahá'ís currently imprisoned in Iran and calls on the nation to comply with the International Covenants on Human Rights.

"As the representative in Congress for the Bahá'í Temple of North America, I know the Bahá'í faith well -- a faith of tolerance and diversity of thought," Congressman Kirk said. "Over the last two years, the Iranian regime established the institutional mechanisms necessary to execute a campaign of ethnic cleansing against its Bahá'í minority -- ordering Bahá'ís to register their social activities with the state, expelling Bahá'ís from universities, expelling Bahá'ís from business sectors, raiding Bahá'í homes, destroying Bahá'í cemeteries and arresting Bahá'í community leaders.

"Today, the House of Representatives showed its support for Bahá'ís in Iran and around the globe. We will not stand idly by as Iran continues its brutal persecution of Bahá'ís."

In March and May of 2008, Iranian intelligence officials in Mashhad and Tehran arrested and imprisoned seven Bahá'í community leaders, including Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mahvash Sabet, and Vahid Tizfahm. In February, Iranian prosecutors announced that the Bahá'ís would stand trial on charges of

“espionage for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, and propaganda against the Islamic Republic.” Their trial has been delayed multiple times by the Iranian government.

On January 23, 2008, the United States Department of State released a statement urging the Iranian regime to release all individuals held without due process and a fair trial, including the 3 young Bahá'ís being held in an Iranian Ministry of Intelligence detention center in Shiraz.

In November 2007, the Iranian Ministry of Information in Shiraz jailed Bahá'ís Ms. Raha Sabet, 33, Mr. Sasan Taqva, 32, and Ms. Haleh Roohi, 29 for ostensibly “indirectly teaching the Bahá'í Faith” and “engaging in anti-government propaganda” while educating underprivileged children and gave them 4-year prison terms, which they are serving.

Congressman Kirk, founder and co-chair of the House Iran Working Group, represents the Bahá'í House of Worship for the North American Continent located in Wilmette, Ill.

A copy of the resolution as passed is below.

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 175

Condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Bahá'í minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 13, 2009

Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Bahá'í minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2006, and 2008, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Bahá'í community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Bahá'í faith;

Whereas in November 2007, the Iranian Ministry of Information in Shiraz jailed Bahá'ís Ms. Raha Sabet, 33, Mr. Sasan Taqva, 32, and Ms. Haleh Roohi, 29 for ostensibly “indirectly teaching the Bahá'í Faith” and “engaging in anti-government propaganda” while educating underprivileged children and gave them 4-year prison terms, which they are serving;

Whereas Ms. Sabet, Mr. Taqva, and Ms. Rooshi were targeted solely on the basis of their

religion;

Whereas, on January 23, 2008, the United States Department of State released a statement urging the Iranian regime to release all individuals held without due process and a fair trial, including the 3 young Bahá'ís being held in an Iranian Ministry of Intelligence detention center in Shiraz;

Whereas in March and May of 2008, Iranian intelligence officials in Mashhad and Tehran arrested and imprisoned Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, the members of the coordinating group for the Bahá'í community in Iran;

Whereas these seven leaders have been imprisoned for well over a year and are yet to stand trial, the trial having been delayed multiple times;

Whereas official Iranian media has announced they will face charges of “espionage for Israel, insulting religious sanctities and propaganda against the Islamic Republic”;

Whereas these seven Bahá'í leaders were targeted solely on the basis of their religion; and

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Bahá'í minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran to immediately release the seven leaders and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion, including: Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, Ms. Raha Sabet, Mr. Sasan Taqva, and Ms. Haleh Roohi; and

(3) calls on the President and Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn Iran's continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion, including Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, Ms. Raha Sabet, Mr. Sasan Taqva, and Ms. Haleh Roohi.

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